

EVALUATING THE BARRIERS TO COMPLETING A COLLEGE INTERNSHIP

by

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### **Abstract**

Undergraduate student internships are an important aspect of the college experience for many students and are widely perceived to be formative co-curricular experiences that lead to improved long-term employment outcomes (Knouse, Tanner & Harris, 1999). Prior research suggests that internships have value for students, employers, and universities alike because they provide students opportunities for professional development, offer educators a setting to translate curriculum into real-world application, and supply employers with a low-cost option for trained talent (Brooks, et al., 1995; Burke & Carton, 2013; Maertz, Stoeberl & Marks, 2014). However, some question internship accessibility, especially with the rising trend of unpaid internships. This study explores the barriers for undergraduate students at East Carolina University to find, accept, and complete an internship. Surveys completed by current undergraduate students at ECU were analyzed to create profiles of internship participants versus nonparticipants and identify common barriers. This research will help inform university administrators and program leaders on how to address the needs of students entering the workforce.

*Keywords:* Internship, barriers, internship outcomes, access.

### **Evaluating the Barriers to Completing a College Internship**

Internship programs are considered to be a “high-impact practice” by postsecondary education leaders because they “facilitate learning outside the classroom” and “represent enriching educational experiences” (NSSE, 2018, p. 15). University curricula reflect this notion, with many disciplines requiring and/or offering academic credit for internships (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Hickman, 2014). However, while there have been several studies demonstrating the positive benefits of internships, not all students have ready access to these immersive experiences. Little research has been done to examine equity and accessibility to broad student populations. For institutions of higher education to provide quality educational experiences, it is important to understand the value of internships, variables associated with positive internship outcomes, and barriers that may exist for some students to successfully find, accept, and complete an internship experience. This study aims to identify common barriers and to provide sociodemographic profiles for students who do and do not complete an internship experience while in college.

### **Background**

The prevalence of internships in the undergraduate setting make them a worthy phenomenon to study. There are a few organizations that collect information nationally about internship participation. First, the National Survey of Student Engagement, which reports that 49% of college seniors have completed or are currently in the process of completing an internship or field experience (NSSE, 2018). Another group, the National Association of Colleges and Employers—an organization representing college career counselors, recruiting professionals, and business affiliates—indicates that 38% of juniors and 55% of seniors had an

internship or co-op experience (NACE, 2018). Other studies suggest that the number of students completing internships is even higher. Edwards and Hertel-Fernandez report that 84% of college graduates had completed an internship in 2006 (2010). Without a universally accepted definition and tool for measuring internships, the participation rate varies across different studies. Indeed, inconsistent terminology used to study internships and similar work-based learning experiences is a significant limitation to researching their prevalence, impact, and outcomes (Hora et al., 2019). For example, the National Survey of Student Engagement uses a compound question, asking students to report their participation in an “internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement” (NSSE, 2018). Since each of these experiences has different program design, supervision, tasks, regulations, and outcome goals, the conflation of these work-based learning experiences is problematic. However, it does provide at least a proxy measure for the level of participation in work-based learning experiences.

### **Internship Outcomes**

Internships provide students opportunities for professional development, offer educators a setting to translate curriculum into real-world application, and supply employers with a low-cost option for trained talent (Brooks, et al., 1995; Burke & Carton, 2013; Maertz, Stoeberl & Marks, 2014). In regard to student outcomes, prior research on internships has demonstrated positive outcomes generally for: the development of practical or job-specific knowledge and skills, enhanced employment opportunities and job search activities, development of soft-skills and vocational self-concept, improved school-to-work transition and lessened reality shock, and improved academic performance. These benefits have led universities, industries, and recruiting agencies to promote the growth of internship programs as a desirable model for workforce preparedness.

**Benefits of Internships**

Internships have consistently been cited as vehicles for enhancing a student's career development, whether through learning new skills or narrowing a student's vocational interests. Oftentimes as the first foray into the professional realm, internships offer students a realistic preview of the job environment. The experience can provide students with on-the-job training that supplements classroom learning as well as a setting to apply technical knowledge. One study (Raymond, McNabb & Matthaei, 1993) found that employers and college seniors ranked internships as the most effective method for obtaining the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the workplace. Internships also help students crystalize a vocational self-concept—"a degree of clarity and certainty of self-perception with respect to vocationally relevant attitudes, values, interests, needs and abilities" (Barrett & Tinsley, 1977). Internships can help a student decide what sort of job characteristics are best suited for their skills and interests, especially among students who experience higher levels of autonomy and supervisor mentoring when compared to their non-intern peers (Taylor 1988, Brooks et al., 1995). For example, Pedro's (1984) longitudinal study among female college students showed that those participating in internships reported changes in self-values and work-specific needs, such as a greater emphasis on task variety and less need for working with people.

This enhanced vocational self-concept can also cultivate an attraction to a specific industry, company, or organization boosting job pursuit activities and easing the transition into the workplace environment. As student interns begin to form professional relationships with their supervisors, clients, and other colleagues, they gain perspective on organizational culture, job characteristics, and work-life balance (Premack & Wanous, 1985). Mutually beneficial internship experiences can lead to enhanced employment opportunities, since employers

typically look to hire well-performing interns after graduation (Zhao & Liden, 2011). Prior research has also shown that students who successfully complete internships obtain employment faster after graduation, have higher compensation, and greater overall job satisfaction than their non-intern peers (Gault, Leach & Duey, 2010; Saniter & Siedler, 2014). Although, some of these studies are discipline-specific and the results may not translate across all fields.

### **Equity and Access**

Most research has focused on the relative benefits of internships for enhancing a student's professional development and employment outcomes. However, with the rising trend of unpaid internships and a selective hiring bias towards students who have internship experience (Smith, 2019), some researchers have raised questions about the accessibility of student internships. Hora and colleagues point out that few studies have examined potential barriers to internship participation, "particularly with respect to low-income, first-generation, and/or minoritized college students" (2019). This is concerning because the benefits of internship participation may make it easier for students to find quality, high-paying jobs and, without the experience, those students may be at a disadvantage creating a hindrance to social mobility—an exacerbation to an already prevalent racial and class divide in the United States (Alon, 2009; Curiale, 2009). Smith argues that internships have become a critical gatekeeper for a growing number of industries and that students in diverse fields like journalism, fashion merchandising, and human development have less opportunity to find a paid internship than "students in majors dominated by white males, such as business, engineering, and computer science" (2019). Furthermore, the disparate outcomes of unpaid internships compared to paid internships compounds this inequity. Students who complete paid internships are more likely to receive a full-time job offer at the end of their experience and will likely be paid a higher starting salary, with interns at private for-profit

companies yielding the highest salary and job offer rates (NACE, 2016). Additionally, paid internships are shown to have greater developmental value, and students from low-income backgrounds are less likely to be satisfied with an unpaid internship than their peers from high-income backgrounds negatively affecting job pursuit intentions (McHugh, 2017).

Evaluating internship participation rates across sociodemographic factors provides further evidence that barriers exist for students from marginalized backgrounds. First, with regard to race, Knouse, Tanner & Harris showed that white students are more likely to complete internships than black students (1999). Considering the racial wealth gap—the median household wealth for white families is twelve times higher than that of black families (Jones, 2017)—this especially demonstrates a barrier for black students to accept an unpaid internship. Prior academic achievement is also linked with internship participation; students with higher grade point averages (GPA) are more likely to complete internships (Mansfield, 2011; Binder et al., 2015; Hora et al., 2019). Since students from marginalized backgrounds face formidable obstacles in the academic setting (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Benner & Wang, 2014), these students face an additional challenge to enhance their resume with internship experience. A comprehensive report by the experiential education research firm, Intern Bridge, found that internship participation varies across numerous sociodemographic characteristics including race, gender, socioeconomic status, academic discipline, and achievement levels (Gardner, 2011). Particularly, with respect to gender, women are 77 percent more likely to be engaged in an unpaid internship than men (Gardner, 2011). Overall, these findings indicate the existence of barriers to completing an undergraduate internship as well as specific barriers to paid internships that need to be further elucidated.



Another equity concern is from legal and policy perspectives. Perlin argues that ambiguous employment laws enable the exploitation of unpaid interns (2011). For example, most interns are not considered employees by the Civil Rights Act or the Fair Labor Standards Act (Curiale, 2009; Hickman, 2014) and “also are ineligible for employee benefits and are unprotected against discrimination and sexual harassment under federal, state, and local laws” (Senat et al., 2019). The U.S. Department of Labor has provided criteria that internships in the for-profit business sector must meet in order to justify not paying student interns (2018); however, it was not until 2013 that the “Black Swan Case” established judicial review of the vague U.S. Department of Labor guidance (Hickman & Merrill, 2013). Within the last ten years, over 30 lawsuits have been filed against employers by unpaid interns (McHugh, 2017) establishing significant precedence for unpaid or underpaid interns to demand remuneration for back wages (Brandeisky, 2014). Given this context, while the prevalence of internships has increased, it is not without controversy.

### **Methods**

To better understand the barriers to accessing and completing a college internship, this study employs a quantitative design. Survey data was collected from adult students at East Carolina University (ECU). Only ECU Honors College participants were invited to take the survey although respondents were encouraged to share it with students outside the Honors College. This sampling method was intended to generate a diverse group of academic disciplines<sup>1</sup>. The Honors College at ECU is a merit-based program with a total student enrollment of approximately 800 students. Each student in the program is awarded a merit scholarship varying from \$10,000 to approximately \$63,000 distributed over four years, and students are offered specialized advising, early class registration, and other benefits. Distributing

the survey to this group provided a wide variety of academic programs and majors, but it seriously limited the comparative power between the sample and the larger population of students at ECU because the sample is not representative of the larger ECU population.

However, no discernment can be made between honors and non-honors students since respondents were not asked to identify their status as an Honors student. The data collected was anonymous and no incentive was offered to complete the survey. A total of 89 students completed the survey representing 38 unique majors and interdisciplinary programs. Respondent demographics are reported in Table 1.

### **Survey Measures**

The survey used in this study (see Appendix A) was designed to collect demographic information including year in school, age, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation student status, enrollment status, GPA, academic program, and information on paid employment, including hours worked per week and hourly wage. For questions which may have a perceived social stigma such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, family income, hourly wage, and GPA, respondents were given the option to prefer not to respond in order to limit response bias. After completing the demographic portion, participants were then asked whether they completed an internship experience. If they answered yes, they were asked to select from a list of descriptive statements about their internship experience; if the students completed more than one internship, they were asked to consider their most recent internship only. If the respondent answered no, they were asked a follow-up question to determine whether the student had an interest in completing an internship but did not/could not or if they intended to complete an internship later in their college career. From there, students who responded that they had an interest in completing an internship but did not/could not were asked to identify what prevented

them from doing so. Finally, all respondents were asked about university-specific resources regarding internship support and outreach.

Since previous studies have not clearly defined what an internship is, the following definition developed by Hora, et al. was provided to respondents:

*An internship is a position held within an established company or organization while completing a college degree, certificate, or diploma program. It involves working at the company or organization and performing tasks similar in nature and skill-level to tasks done by entry-level employees in the organization. (2019)*

This definition was used because it provides a clearly understood and broad inclusion of various work-based learning experiences. It was previously tested with a group of career advisors and experiential learning professionals (Hora et al., 2019).

### **Data Analysis**

To create a profile of those who do and do not complete an internship experience, descriptive statistics are reported for both groups. Multiple chi square tests of independence were performed to determine whether there are significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) among sociodemographic variables between the two groups. Next to address internship barriers, responses are visualized to determine which barriers were reported most often. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data, perform chi square tests, and create data visualizations.

### **Results**

Respondents reported a 51.7% internship participation rate. Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Profiles by Internship Participation

	Internship Participation (n=89)		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	Yes (n=46)	No (n=43)		
<b>Respondent Demographics</b>				
Gender				
Male	7 (15.2)	11 (25.6)	2.30	0.316
Female	38 (82.6)	32 (74.4)		
Non-binary/other	1 (2.2)	0 (0)		
Year in School				
First-year	4 (8.7)	16 (37.2)	16.73*	<0.001
Sophomore	6 (13.0)	8 (18.6)		
Junior	12 (26.1)	12 (27.9)		
Senior	24 (52.2)	7 (16.3)		
Age				
18-20	17 (37.0)	36 (83.7)	20.33*	<0.001
21-24	28 (60.9)	7 (16.3)		
25-30	1 (2.2)	0 (0)		
Race/ethnicity				
Asian	6 (13.0)	2 (4.7)	4.23	0.376
Black or African American	2 (4.3)	3 (7.0)		
Hispanic or Latino	1 (2.2)	0 (0)		
White or Caucasian	34 (73.9)	37 (86.0)		
Other	3 (6.5)	1 (2.3)		
First-generation student				
Yes	4 (8.7)	9 (20.9)	2.83	0.093
No	42 (91.3)	33 (76.7)		
Estimated annual family income				
\$10,000-\$14,999	0 (0)	1 (2.3)	1.98	0.961
\$25,000-\$34,999	2 (4.3)	1 (2.3)		
\$35,000-\$49,999	2 (4.3)	3 (7.0)		
\$50,000-\$74,999	5 (10.9)	5 (11.6)		
\$75,000-\$99,999	5 (10.9)	4 (9.3)		
\$100,000-\$149,999	13 (28.3)	10 (23.3)		
\$150,000-\$199,999	8 (17.4)	6 (14.0)		
\$200,000+	4 (8.7)	3 (7.0)		
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Having paid employment				
Yes	28 (60.9)	19 (44.2)	2.48	0.115
No	18 (39.1)	24 (55.8)		
Hours worked per week				
0-10	10 (21.7)	5 (11.6)	4.92	0.295
10-20	15 (32.6)	10 (23.3)		
20-30	1 (2.2)	4 (9.3)		
30-40	1 (2.2)	0 (0)		
40+	1 (2.2)	0 (0)		
Hourly Wage				
Less than \$7.25	1 (2.2)	1 (2.3)	0.87	0.930
\$7.25-\$9.00	5 (10.9)	5 (11.6)		
\$9.01-\$12.00	15 (32.6)	8 (18.6)		
\$12.01-\$15.00	5 (10.9)	3 (7.0)		
\$15.01+	1 (2.2)	1 (2.3)		

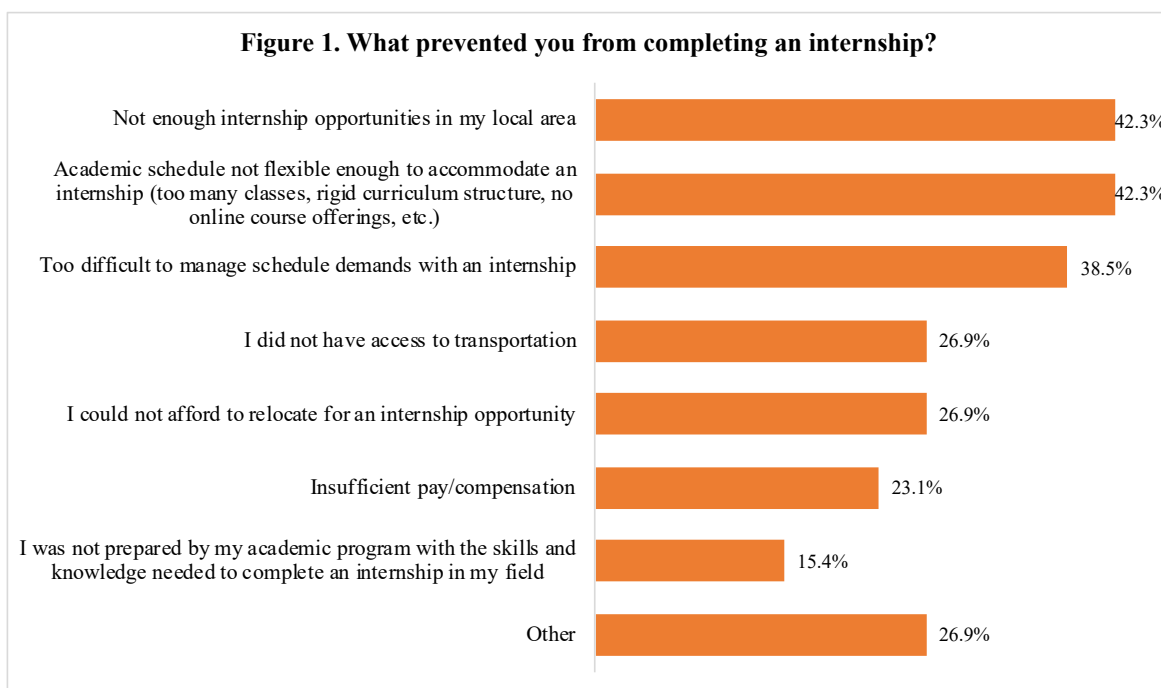
Academic Status					
Enrollment Status					
Full-time >12hr	45 (97.8)	42 (97.7)	0.002	0.962	
Part-time <12hr	1 (2.2)	1 (2.3)			
GPA					
2.0-2.4	1 (2.2)	0 (0)	1.36	0.716	
2.5-2.9	1 (2.2)	2 (4.7)			
3.0-3.4	10 (21.7)	9 (20.9)			
3.5-4.0	33 (71.7)	32 (74.4)			
Academic Program					
Arts and humanities	4 (8.7)	8 (18.6)	9.21	0.325	
Biosciences, agriculture, natural resources	6 (13.0)	4 (9.3)			
Business	6 (13.0)	4 (9.3)			
Communications, media, public relations	9 (19.6)	1 (2.3)			
Engineering	3 (6.5)	3 (7.0)			
Health professions	15 (32.6)	16 (37.2)			
Physical sciences, math, computer science	1 (2.2)	2 (4.7)			
Social Sciences	4 (8.7)	6 (14.0)			
Social service professions	4 (8.7)	3 (7.0)			

*Note:* Relative frequencies appear in parentheses as percentages. Respondents were given the option to “prefer not to respond” to some questions which are excluded from the results. \* $p < .001$

The results indicate that internship participation differs significantly across age groups, ( $p < .001$ ) and year in school ( $p < .001$ ). This suggests that most students who pursue an internship do so later in their college career. However, the data does not show any significant variation across other sociodemographic factors including gender, race/ethnicity, income, employment, or academic status. These results differ from previous studies which show a significant relationship between factors like gender, race/ethnicity, income status, and internship participation. However, this discrepancy is likely due to selection bias. The results also show that of the students who completed an internship, about half (47.8%) had an unpaid internship which is a substantially higher rate than other studies which have used compensation as a variable (McHugh, 2017; Hora et al., 2019).

To assess access to internships, students who reported that they wanted to complete an internship but could not or did not were asked to identify barriers. Respondents selected from a

list of common barriers including issues around internship compensation, access to transportation and housing, and the availability of internship opportunities, or they were offered a space to provide other reasons. Figure 1 presents the aggregate responses to the survey question about internship barriers.



*Note:* Respondents were only asked about potential barriers if they confirmed that they had an interest in pursuing an internship but did not or could not.

Most students who listed other barriers reported that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancelation of their planned or current internships presenting a barrier to completion<sup>2</sup>. All respondents were also asked to identify university-specific resources that they have used or encountered with regard to internships. The data shows 37.9% of student interns believe “the university provides adequate outreach and resources regarding internships,” compared with only 27.9% of non-interns.

### **Discussion**

This study aimed to identify barriers for college students to complete an internship and to generate a sociodemographic profile of student interns compared with non-interns. This paper adds to the studies of internship program design by addressing common barriers for students to find, accept, and complete an internship. It is important for higher education administrators and other internship administrators to understand that—while internships have value—the positive benefits of internships are not accessible to all students. As internship programs continue to proliferate, there must be a concerted effort by colleges and universities to address potential barriers in order to fully realize the effective outcomes of internship experiences.

The results of this study show an internship participation rate of 51.7%, which is consistent with national measures of college internship participation (NSSE, 2018; NACE, 2018). However, while other surveys and national organizations typically measure the participation rates only for college seniors, this study explores internship participation rates across grade years. The results show a significant relationship between year in school and age and internship participation. While it is generally expected for college students to complete an internship later in their college career, there is little research that explores the potential benefits or outcomes of internship completion at an earlier grade level. Given the demonstrated benefit of internships to help students crystalize a vocational self-concept and refine career goals, future research should examine whether there is a greater value in completing an internship before a student's last year of study. Furthermore, curriculum designers should investigate whether rigid class structure throughout a student's course of study may prohibit a student from pursuing an internship earlier, since this was the second most reported barrier by non-interns. One question to

explore is whether students who complete internships earlier in their college career decide on a major sooner and whether this has an effect on how long it takes a student to graduate.

While this survey showed that no other sociodemographic factors have a significant relationship with internship participation aside from year of study and age, the results must be analyzed in the context of the sample. Given that students who come from privileged backgrounds are more likely to be awarded a merit scholarship, this selection bias may have skewed the data (Taylor, 2018) since the Honors College is a merit-based program. For example, the majority of respondents indicated an estimated household income above \$100,000 compared with the national median household income which was approximately \$62,000 in 2018 (Guzman, 2019). With the financial support and economic privilege of Honors College students considered, this may account for the discrepancy. Overall, the sample is not representative of the larger population and inferences cannot be made about the population demographics of those who do and do not complete internships. A more diverse sample is needed to make precise conclusions about the effects of certain demographic variables on the rate of internship participation.

However, even among this group of high-achieving students, barriers still existed that prevented some from completing an internship. The most common barrier reported was a lack of opportunities available in a student's geographic area. This barrier may be more prevalent for rural or suburban universities where there is not a high concentration of businesses nearby. Also linked with this barrier is lack of access to transportation or housing which were both reported by 26.9% of non-interns. When local internship opportunities do not exist or are in sparse supply, students may be forced to consider distant internships that have an added transportation or relocation expense. As an example, a hot spot for undergraduate internships is Washington, D.C. where an estimated 20,000 internships are filled every summer, mostly in the government and



for-profit business sectors (Politico, 2009). The median rent for a one bedroom apartment in Washington, D.C. is over 40% higher than the national median (Josephson, 2019), so it is unlikely that low-income students could afford the added expense to relocate, especially for an unpaid internship. The third most reported barrier was scheduling conflicts that were too demanding to complete an internship. With results indicating that more than 50% of students had paid employment, and nearly 100% were enrolled as full-time students, some may not have the time to commit to a part-time or full-time internship. These barriers present formidable challenges for universities to address.

As higher education institutions have contributed to the growth of internship programs, however, they have not been particularly adept at ensuring there are equitable outcomes (McDermott, 2013). Burke and Carton argue that one reason universities incorporate internships into curricula is for financial incentives if academic credit is offered in lieu of classroom instruction, since there is a lower administrative cost to offering those experiences; they also argue that there is not consistent monitoring and regulation to ensure the experiences have positive educational outcomes for students (2013). This issue caught national attention in 2010 when thirteen university presidents sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Labor arguing against the federal government's plan to begin enforcing stricter employment regulations regarding student interns (Eisenbrey, 2010). The results of this study show that serious barriers do exist and for universities to meet their mission of elevating the quality of life for the students they serve, they must work to alleviate the obstacles reported here, especially considering that only 27.9% of non-interns believe that their university provides adequate outreach and resources to support internships.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions**

Internships are valuable work-based learning experiences which have become a prevalent aspect of the American higher education system. Employers show a preference towards job candidates who have demonstrated experience, and internships provide students a leg-up in the competitive job market. However, as university, government, and industry leaders have argued for the expansion of these opportunities, little attention has been paid to the equity of internship outcomes across sociodemographic factors or whether barriers to access exist in the first place. This study has shown that barriers do exist for some students, and that universities have not adequately addressed these inequities. Prior research suggests that these barriers are more prevalent for students from marginalized backgrounds. This study also indicates that internship participation varies across grade level, and that rigid curriculum design may be a barrier for some students to complete an internship experience especially earlier in their college career. Ultimately, a more representative sample is needed to draw statistical conclusions about the effect of sociodemographic factors on internship participation, but prior research indicates that race, gender, income status, academic achievement can all affect a student's ability or decision to pursue an internship experience while in college.

Given the demonstrated positive benefits for student's vocational and self-development, as well as the enhanced employment outcomes, universities must rise to the challenge to identify specific barriers within their institutional environment that may prohibit some students from completing internships. Working with industry partners, universities can leverage their resources to better support students from diverse backgrounds. Specifically, universities should provide students with information about internships early in college, provide resources to connect students with industry partners, support the development of minority outreach-based internship

programs, deliver need-based aid for students cost-prohibited from taking unpaid internships, and screen internship opportunities to ensure that students are receiving quality work-based learning experiences that are mutually beneficial for both the student and internship organization.

Future research should use a more reliable sampling method to further explore the relationship between sociodemographic variables and internship participation. This study also revealed questions about the potential benefits of internships completed before a student's senior year of college which deserve a more thorough investigation with regard to the potential impact on degree completion efficiency and job satisfaction.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The COVID-19 pandemic altered the original plan for data collection and the sampling method. Initially, researchers intended to collect survey responses in person from those present in the university's student center during a specified time frame. This sampling method was not possible after social distancing guidelines were enacted, and the university closed facilities on March 11, 2020. A convenience sample of students in the Honors College was used instead. This method likely introduced a selection bias.

<sup>2</sup>On March 18, 2020 ECU Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson announced the cancelation of all face-to-face field experiences, practica, and internships. Students were not allowed to return to their university-sanctioned internship sites on or off campus for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

## Appendix A

**SHIP**

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**Start of Block: Default Question Block**

Q33 You are being invited to participate in a research study titled “Evaluating the Barriers to Completing a College Internship” being conducted by Colin Johnson, a student at East Carolina University, under the supervision of Dr. Sharon Paynter, an ECU faculty member. The survey will take approximately 7 minutes to complete. The purpose of this study is to assess the barriers for undergraduate students to complete an internship experience. The information collected may help craft or revise internship program design to better meet the needs of students and to increase accessibility to internship experiences. Your responses will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be collected. Your participation in the research is **voluntary**. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. There is **no penalty for not taking part** in this research study. Please contact Colin Johnson (johnsonc16@students.ecu.edu) or Dr. Sharon Paynter (paynters@ecu.edu) or call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

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Q34 I have read the above statement, I understand what I have read, and I would like to participate in this study.

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If I have read the above statement, I understand what I have read, and I would like to participate i... = No*

End of Block: Default Question Block

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Start of Block: Block 1

Q4 Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at East Carolina University?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at East Carolina University? = No*

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Page 

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Break

Q5 What is your current year in school?

- ☐ First-year (1)
  - ☐ Sophomore (2)
  - ☐ Junior (3)
  - ☐ Senior (4)
- 

Q6 What is your current age?

- ☐ 18 years to 20 years (2)
  - ☐ 21 to 24 years (3)
  - ☐ 25 to 30 years (4)
  - ☐ 31 to 40 years (5)
  - ☐ 41 years and older (6)
  - ☐ Prefer not to respond (7)
-

Q9 What is your gender?

☐ Male (1)

☐ Female (2)

☐ Non-binary/third gender (3)

☐ Prefer to self-describe (4) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Prefer not to respond (5)

-----

Q15 Do you identify as transgender?

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other

identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more.

- ☐ Yes (1)
  - ☐ No (2)
  - ☐ Prefer not to respond (3)
- 

Q7 What is your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ Asian (1)
  - ☐ Black or African American (2)
  - ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
  - ☐ White or Caucasian (4)
  - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (5)
  - ☐ Other (6)
  - ☐ Prefer not to respond (7)
-

Q11

Do you consider yourself a first-generation college student?

For the purpose of this study, a first-generation college student is a student from a family in which neither parent has earned a four-year undergraduate degree.

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

☐ Not sure (3)

☐ Prefer not to respond (4)

-----



Q12 What is your family's estimated annual household income?

- ☐ Less than \$10,000 (1)
  - ☐ \$10,000 - \$14,999 (2)
  - ☐ \$15,000 - \$24,999 (3)
  - ☐ \$25,000 - \$34,999 (4)
  - ☐ \$35,000 - \$49,999 (5)
  - ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999 (6)
  - ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999 (7)
  - ☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999 (8)
  - ☐ \$150,000 - \$199,999 (9)
  - ☐ \$200,000 or more (10)
  - ☐ Not sure (11)
  - ☐ Prefer not to respond (12)
-

Q16 Do you currently have paid employment?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you currently have paid employment? = Yes*

Q17 On average, how many hours do you work per week?

☐ 0-10 (1)

☐ 10-20 (2)

☐ 20-30 (3)

☐ 30-40 (4)

☐ 40 or more (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you currently have paid employment? = Yes*

Q19 What is your hourly wage?

- ☐ Less than \$7.25 (1)
- ☐ \$7.25 - \$9.00 (2)
- ☐ \$9.01 - \$12.00 (3)
- ☐ \$12.01 - \$15.00 (4)
- ☐ \$15.01 or above (5)
- ☐ Prefer not to respond (6)

End of Block: Block 1

---

Start of Block: Block 2

Q20 What is your current academic status?

- ☐ Full-time enrolled student (>12 credit hours) (1)
- ☐ Part-time enrolled student ( (2)
- ☐ Not currently enrolled (3)

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your current academic status? = Not currently enrolled*

---

Q21 What is your cumulative GPA?

- ☐ less than 1.0 (1)
- ☐ 1.0-1.9 (2)
- ☐ 2.0-2.4 (3)
- ☐ 2.5-2.9 (4)
- ☐ 3.0-3.4 (5)
- ☐ 3.5-4.0 (6)
- ☐ Prefer not to respond (7)

---

Q22 What is your academic program (major)?

---

Q23 Does your academic program require a clinical practicum? (e.g. teacher education, nursing and other related health fields)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Not sure (3)

End of Block: Block 2

---

Start of Block: Block 3

Q26 Have you completed an internship experience while in college or are you currently completing an internship?

An internship is a position held within an established company or organization while completing a college degree, certificate, or diploma program. It involves working at the company or organization and performing tasks similar in nature and skill-level to tasks done by entry-level employees in the organization.

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
-

*Display This Question:*

*If Have you completed an internship experience while in college or are you currently completing an i... = No*

Q27 Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship?

- ☐ I have no interest in completing an internship (1)
- ☐ My chosen field/career does not offer internships (2)
- ☐ I plan to complete an internship later in my college career (3)
- ☐ I have an interest in completing an internship, but I did not/could not (4)
- ☐ Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (6)

*Skip To: Q32 If Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship? = I have an interest in completing an internship, but I did not/could not*

*Skip To: Q31 If Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship? = I have no interest in completing an internship*

*Skip To: Q31 If Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship? = My chosen field/career does not offer internships*

*Skip To: Q31 If Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship? = I plan to complete an internship later in my college career*

-----

Q28 Please select all of the statements that describe your internship

If you have completed more than one internship, please consider your most recent internship only.

- ☐ My internship was required by my academic program. (1)
- ☐ I was placed in an internship by my academic program or advisor. (2)
- ☐ My internship was self-seeking. I was not assigned an internship by my academic program or advisor. (3)
- ☐ I received course credit for my internship. (4)
- ☐ I was paid for my internship. (5)
- ☐ I had access to transportation to and from my internship site. (6)
- ☐ My internship required housing or relocation. (7)
- ☐ I was adequately prepared for my internship by my academic program. (8)
- ☐ I was enrolled as a full-time student while completing my internship. (9)
- ☐ I was enrolled as a part-time student while completing my internship. (11)
- ☐ I was working a paid job while completing my internship. (10)

---

Q35 On average, how many hours per week did you spend at your internship?

- ☐ 0-10 (1)
- ☐ 10-20 (2)
- ☐ 20-30 (3)
- ☐ 30-40 (4)
- ☐ 40+ (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Which statement best describes why you have not completed an internship? = I have an interest in completing an internship, but I did not/could not*



Q32 What prevented you from completing an internship? (select all that apply)

☐

Insufficient pay/compensation (1)

☐

Not enough internship opportunities in my local area (2)

☐

Academic schedule not flexible enough to accommodate an internship (too many classes, rigid curriculum structure, no online course offerings, etc.) (3)

☐

Too difficult to manage schedule demands with an internship (4)

☐

I did not have access to transportation (5)

☐

I could not afford to relocate for an internship opportunity (6)

☐

I was not prepared by my academic program with the skills and knowledge needed to complete an internship in my field (7)

☐

Lack of childcare provided (8)

☐

Other (9) \_\_\_\_\_

-----

Q31 Please select all of the statements that apply to you

- ☐ I have received assistance from university resources to complete an internship. (1)
- ☐ My academic advisor has had a discussion with me about internships. (2)
- ☐ I have seen a career counselor about internship opportunities. (3)
- ☐ I was exposed to advertising on campus about internship opportunities. (4)
- ☐ I utilized Handshake to search for an internship. (5)
- ☐ A professor or other staff member connected me with industry contacts. (6)
- ☐ I believe that the university provides adequate outreach and resources regarding internships. (7)
- ☐ None of the above (8)

End of Block: Block 3

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